

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

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## **HOUSE ENERGY & COMMERCE COMMITTEE APPROVES MARKEY NUCLEAR ANTI-TERRORISM AMENDMENT**

### ***Committee Agrees to Continue Negotiations On Two Related Nuclear Amendments***

**Washington, D.C. --** The House Energy and Commerce Committee today adopted by voice vote an amendment offered Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA) which would require the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to conduct a comprehensive rulemaking to revise and update the protections which nuclear power plants are required to have in place to defend against terrorist attacks. The amendment was offered to a package of nuclear security amendments that the NRC had requested the Congress to adopt in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist bombings.

“As terrible as the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> were, a successful terrorist assault on a nuclear power plant could result in a full scale nuclear core meltdown and breach of reactor containment that could result in countless more deaths and injuries,” said Rep. Markey.

Rep. Markey continued, “We cannot afford to wait until the terrorists target one of these facilities before we take action.”

The amendment adopted by the Committee today would:

- Require the NRC, in consultation with U.S. defense and security agencies, to conduct a rulemaking within the next year to reassess the threat to its facilities, taking into account the events of September 11 (multiple coordinated teams of attackers, sophisticated knowledge of the reactor operations, insider threats, air or water-based attacks, large explosive devices, etc.), and to establish new regulations to ensure that facilities are ready for the revised threat.
- Require armed escorts capable of defending against a realistic threat for spent fuel shipments.
- Require NRC-run anti-terrorist force on force exercises at each facility at least every 2 years to ensure that the facilities can be defended against a realistic threat (eliminating an industry-backed plan to replace this program with one that it designs and conducts).

In addition, Rep. Markey agreed to withdraw two other nuclear anti-terrorism amendments after the Committee leadership agreed to negotiate language to address certain concerns other Members had raised about the language. The first of these amendments would authorize the President to use the Armed Forces or National Guard to protect NRC licensed facilities when a state of war or national emergency exists, and authorize the President to establish no-fly-zones over NRC licensed facilities when a state of war or national emergency exists. The second would require all personnel transporting radioactive materials to undergo security background checks, require that all radioactive shipments be accompanied by a manifest detailing the contents and amount in the transport, and prohibit shipments of radioactive material to anywhere that is not an NRC or Agreement State licensed facility, a Federal facility, or a foreign destination in a country with whom the U.S. has a nuclear cooperation agreement.

Rep. Markey concluded, “Today’s markup represents an important first step in assuring the protection of our nation’s nuclear power plants.”

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